

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

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FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO SECDEF WASHDC FROM USDEL
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E. O. 11652: XGDSI

TAGS: PARM

SUBJ: TEXT OF SEMENOV-JOHNSON NOVEMBER 8 PRIVATE MEETING
(SALT TWO 345)

REF: SALT TWO GENEVA 5951

1. FOLLOWING, PER PARA 2 REFTTEL, IS TEXT OF OPENING STATEMENT
BY SEMENOV AT NOVEMBER 8 PRIVATE MEETING BETWEEN CHIEFS OF
DELEGATION:

BEGIN TEXT

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1. MINISTER SEMENOV SAID THAT HE HAD REQUESTED THIS MEETING
WITH AMBASSADOR JOHNSON FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING WITH HIM
INFORMALLY, ON A TETE-A-TETE BASIS, THE VARIOUS ISSUES WE WERE
FACING.

2. AT THE NOVEMBER 6 MEETING THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD SET FORTH CONSIDERATIONS TO FACILITATE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE TASK OF WORKING OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE DRAFT PERMANENT AGREEMENT ON THE LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS. AT THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 2 JOHNSON, TOO, HAD SPOKEN OF THE NEED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON SUCH PROVISIONS AS WOULD BE STRICTLY CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL SECURITY AND INADMISSIBILITY OF UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE. SEMENOV DID NOT WANT TO REPEAT WHAT HE HAD SAID ON NOVEMBER 6, BUT ONLY WANTED TO NOTE THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARGUMENTS SUBMITTED ON THAT DATE. HE WOULD NOW LIKE TO TRY TO REMOVE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, ANY IMPRESSIONS WHICH MAY HAVE ARISEN ON THE U. S. SIDE CONCERNING THE ALLEGEDLY ONE-SIDED NATURE OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT TABLED OCTOBER 9. HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH A VIEW COULD BE TAKEN ONLY AS A RESULT OF CONSIDERING ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION, WHILE IGNORING OR CLEARLY UNDERESTIMATING ITS OTHER SIDE WHICH WAS NO LESS IMPORTANT. HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS ONE-SIDED AND WRONG TO APPROACH THE STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THAT PARTICULAR WAY. AT ONE OF THE MEETINGS DURING THE PRESENT PHASE, THE SOVIET SIDE HAD PRESENTED A CHART DEMONSTRATING HOW THE STRATEGIC SITUATION COULD BE REVERSED AS A RESULT OF THE PRESENCE OF FORWARD-BASED SYSTEMS OF COUNTRY A NEAR THE BORDERS OF COUNTRY B. HE RECALLED THAT JOHNSON HAD THEN COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT QUESTION. SUCH A VIEW, HOWEVER, WAS STRICTLY SUBJECTIVE, AND THERE WERE MANY INDICATIONS THAT THE U. S. SIDE DID NOT REALLY HOLD SUCH A VIEW, AND THAT IT WAS ONLY BEING USED AS AN ARGUMENT AT THE NEGOTIATIONS IN PLACE OF A TRUE ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION AS A WHOLE. IN ADDITION, AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT WOULD ALSO SHOW THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WAS NOT VALID. THE CHART HAD DEMONSTRATED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF COUNTRY A AND COUNTRY B WERE TO TRADE PLACES AND THIS REPRESENTED LOGICAL PROOF ON THE BASIS OF AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION IN ALL ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS. THIS WAS BY NO MEANS A JEU-D'ESPRIT OR A HYPOTHETICAL

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GAME. THE U. S. SIDE HAD ALSO REPEATEDLY SPOKEN OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FORWARD-BASED SYSTEM FACTOR IN THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES AND OF ITS ROLE IN AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GEOGRAPHIC FACTOR. TRUE, THIS HAD NOT BEEN DONE AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, BUT IN ESSENCE THIS DID NOT CHANGE ANYTHING. HE WOULD REMIND JOHNSON OF A WELL-KNOWN PRONOUNCEMENT MADE ON THE U. S. SIDE OVER 10 YEARS AGO. THIS WAS A REACTION THAT COULD IN NO WAY BE RELATED TO WHAT JOHNSON HAD CALLED AN INSIGNIFICANT ELEMENT. FURTHER, ONE COULD ALSO REFER TO STATEMENTS MADE BY U. S. OFFICIALS SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORWARD BASES FOR SOVIET SUBMARINES WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SOVIET OPERATIONAL SUBS, DUE TO THE FACT THAT SUCH SUBS COULD REMAIN ON STATION IN THE ATLANTIC FOR A LONGER PERIOD

OF TIME. IN A STATEMENT MADE HERE IN GENEVA, THE SOVIET SIDE HAD ALREADY REFERRED TO SIMILAR PRONOUNCEMENTS MADE IN THE U. S. CONGRESS LAST SUMMER DURING DISCUSSION OF THE AGREEMENTS IN FORCE BETWEEN US NOW, WITH REFERENCE TO SUCH BASES FOR U. S. SUBMARINES. A LISTING OF SUCH REFERENCES COULD BE CONTINUED.

3. HOW COULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT THE OTHER SIDE COULD BE SATISFIED WITH ONLY THOSE CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSALS WHICH WERE ADVANCED BY THE U. S. DELEGATION ON THE BASIS OF ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION AND WHICH WOULD MAINTAIN U. S. FORWARD-BASED SYSTEMS DEPLOYED WITHIN REACH OF THE TERRITORY OF THE USSR? AFTER ALL, ALL OF THE QUESTION INVOLVING THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE SIDES COULD NOT BE MEASURED BY TWO DIFFERENT STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENTS, BUT ONLY BY ONE. THEREFORE HE HOPED JOHNSON WOULD UNDERSTAND WHY THE SOVIET SIDE DID NOT AT ALL CONSIDER AS BEING IN LINE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES AND APPROACH TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION THAT WOULD IGNORE THE TASKS SPECIFIED IN THE IMPORTANT DOCUMENT SIGNED BY OUR HIGHEST AUTHORITIES LAST SUMMER, AND THAT PROPOSED TO PRESERVE A UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE FOR ONE SIDE. IT WAS CLEAR THAN NO MATTER HOW ELOQUENT WERE THE ARGUMENTS IN JUSTIFICATION OF SUCH A ONE-SIDED APPROACH, THEY COULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER SIDE. SUCH ARGUMENTS WOULD ALSO BE SEEN AS SUBJECTIVE, ON THOSE SIMPLY OBJECTIVE GROUNDS THAT THE SIDE PRESENTING THEM DID NOT ITSELF BELIEVE WHAT IT SAID.

4. ON OCTOBER 5 JOHNSON HAD ASSERTED THAT THE SOVIET SIDE
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HAD PROPOSED NOTHING IN RETURN FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL, AND HAD ALSO MADE THE ARGUMENT THAT IF THE APPROPRIATE FORCES OF COUNTRY A WERE TO BE WITHDRAWN THE OTHER REMAINING FORCES OF THAT COUNTRY WOULD BE LEFT DEFENSELESS AGAINST THE OPPOSING FORCES OF COUNTRY B. HE HAD TO TELL JOHNSON FRANKLY THAT THE EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF THE GREAT MULTITUDE OF OBJECTIONS TO SUCH AN ARGUMENT. HE WOULD ALSO RECALL THAT SIMILAR ARGUMENTS HAD BEEN MADE DURING THE 19TH CENTURY, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH RESPECT TO AFRICAN AND ASIAN TERRITORIES, BUT HISTORY HAD PROVED THEM TO BE COMPLETELY UNFOUNDED.

5. AS FOR THE SO-CALLED NUCLEAR UMBRELLA, HE HAD ALREADY TOLD JOHNSON THAT SUCH A FUNCTION, IF INDEED IT WAS BELIEVED TO BE INDISPENSIBLE, COULD BE PERFORMED BY WHAT THE U. S. SIDE REFERRED TO AS CENTRAL SYSTEMS. JOHNSON HAD NOT REPLIED AT THE TIME, AND THAT WAS QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE, BECAUSE IN THIS RESPECT BOTH SIDES WERE IN AN IDENTICAL SITUATION AS CONCERNS THE DEFENSE OF THEIR ALLIES. THIS WAS WHY, IN HIS VIEW, THE QUESTION OF FORWARD-BASED NUCLEAR SYSTEMS COULD NOT BE RESOLVED BY ACCEPTANCE OF A NON-SPECIFIC AND VAGUE OBLIGATION NOT TO CIRCUMVENT THE PERMANENT AGREEMENT. THE NON-CIRCUMVENTION PROPOSAL COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT, SINCE IT WAS REALLY AIMED AT PERPETUATING THE PRESENT ABNORMAL

SITUATION, WHERE HUNDREDS OF U. S. NUCLEAR SYSTEMS AND DELIVERY VEHICLES WERE DEPLOYED IN THE VICINITY OF SOVIET BORDERS. WITH THIS IN MIND THE SOVIET SIDE COULD NOT DISREGARD THE FACT THAT, CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES AND THE AGREEMENTS IN FORCE BETWEEN US, SUCH FORCES WERE NOT ONLY NOT REDUCED, BUT ON THE CONTRARY WERE BEING FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL BASES AT LA MADDALENA, ITALY, AND PIRAEUS, GREECE. AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT IF ONE SIDE WAS ADVANCING ITS NUCLEAR SYSTEMS WITHIN REACH OF THE TERRITORY OF THE OTHER SIDE, THEN THE ONLY WAY OF ENSURING EQUAL SECURITY WAS TO WITHDRAW THESE SYSTEMS. AS FOR THE QUESTION OF ALLIES, GIVEN MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND GOODWILL ON BOTH SIDES, THIS NEED NOT BE AN OBSTACLE TO AGREEMENT; WHAT WAS REQUIRED HERE WAS MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY. AFTER ALL, THE SOVIET SIDE WAS NOT PROPOSING TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER OVERNIGHT. LIMITS AS WELL AS TIMING AND PHASING OF WITHDRAWAL OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS COULD BE WORKED OUT BY SPECIFIC AGREED MEASURES WITH U. S. ALLIES, BUT, OF COURSE, THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE ENTIRELY UP TO THE UNITED
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STATES.

6. THE SOVIET PROPOSAL TABLED ON OCTOBER 9 WAS SERIOUS AND FIRM AND SEMENOV WOULD ASK JOHNSON AND JOHNSON'S AUTHORITIES IN WASHINGTON TO TAKE THIS FACT INTO ACCOUNT COMPLETELY. AT THE SAME TIME THE SOVIET SIDE HAD ALREADY STRESSED THAT IT WAS ALSO PREPARED TO CONSIDER OTHER VARIANTS OF A PHASED SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM.

7. READING FROM A TYPED BRIEF, SEMENOV SAID: "I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT IF THE U. S. SIDE WERE TO AGREE TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS AND LIQUIDATION OF CORRESPONDING BASES, THEN WE COULD AGREE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR EACH SIDE OF AGREED AGGREGATE NUMERICAL LEVELS FOR ICBM AND SLBM LAUNCHERS AND STRATEGIC BOMBERS, BUT WITH MANDATORY ACCOUNT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN THRID COUNTRIES." (INTERPRETATION OF THIS PARAGRAPH WAS REPATED AT JOHNSON'S REQUEST.)

8. JOHNSON ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION AND SAID THAT SINCE UNDER THE SOVIET PROPOSAL OUR NUCLEAR SYSTEMS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN, HE CONCLUDED THAT IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH SEMENOV WAS REFERRING TO NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN THE POSSESSION OF THIRD COUNTRIES.

9. SEMENOV REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A RELEVANT QUESTION AND HE WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS IT IN ORDER TO GIVE JOHNSON A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOVIET APPROACH. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE ISSUES WE WERE DISCUSSING AND THE SOVIET SIDE HAD ALREADY TOUCHED ON THIS QUESTION BEFORE. ALTHOUGH THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES HERE CONCERNED LIMITATION OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS OF ONLY THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES, ONE COULD NOT IGNORE SUCH AN IMPORTANT FACT IN TERMS OF AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SITUATION IN GENERAL, AND PARTICULARLY IN ITS

LONG-TERM PROSPECTS, AS THE PRESENCE AND BUILD-UP OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THIRD COUNTRIES. AS NOTED BY L. I. BREZHNEV IN HIS OCTOBER 26, 1973 SPEECH, "WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS CLOSELY INTERRELATED. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR CANNOT IN THE LONG TERM BE RESTRICTED TO THE EFFORTS OF ONLY TWO STATES, PARTICULARLY WHEN OTHERS -- AND ABOVE ALL NUCLEAR POWERS -- WILL AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUE TO BUILD UP THEIR ARMAMENTS."

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10. SEMENOV SAID THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED BY HIS GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ASPECTS OF THIS QUESTION HERE. THESE ASPECTS WERE IN THE FIELD OF VISION OF THE U.S. SIDE AND HE WOULD REFER TO THEM ONLY AS THEY RELATED DIRECTLY TO THE SUBJECT OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS. HE WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE THIRD COUNTRY QUESTION IN THIS C

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